

*The SPSSSM Guide to
Proper Sapphic Styling
excerpted from
"A Lifestyle Compendium for the
Modern Sapphic Socialite"*

*Beatrice Newellyn and Phyllis
Troubridge*

Dinner, coffee, or drinks

What the Collette styled Sapphist will wear: Since the average contemporary watering hole, vegan raw food restaurant, or Thai fusion emporium does not have a dress code, and the evening gown and elbow length gloves ze prefers would be quite out of place, the modern Sapphist often struggles to choose the most fetching attire that is also "casual" enough for today's declining standards in dressing. Although we believe that there is no such thing as being over-dressed, we must admit that one should be careful not to intimidate or overwhelm one's date. For this reason, gloves, boas, floor-length gowns, and corsets should be reserved for the opera, drag balls, and costume parties. Taffeta, lame, velvet and latex should be used sparingly for dinner, coffee, or drinking dates, if at all. Afternoon and after-work dates especially should be casual, as one wants to look like a busy and accomplished person of the world, not as if one has spent all day preparing. Evening dinner dates, especially on the weekend, can support slightly more elaborate attire.

What the Radclyffe Hall styled Sapphist will wear: The modern Sapphist who identifies visually with the Radclyffe Hall aesthetic faces no shortage of clothing options for an evening out. Therefore, when determining the most appropriate ensemble for an engagement, it is crucial that ze consider the social context of the outing. As many contemporary dining and drinking establishments have eschewed the mandatory dress code, the modern Sapphist may choose between a variety of trousers (khaki trousers, denim trousers, and black trousers tend to be appropriate for most situations) and shirts (ranging from the seemingly ubiquitous t-shirt, to the polo shirt— though your authors suggest that the dignified Sapphist leave hir collar unpopped— to a button-down shirt with or without a pattern or accompanied by a tie). The level of formality in dressing in such situations is a largely personal Sapphist decision, leaving much to the discretion of each individual Sapphist— when in doubt, it is wise to consider exactly how much one wants to impress hir date and then build an outfit accordingly.

Lesbian Dates

Certain Sapphists may invite one on dates that can only be described as peculiarly “lesbian” in nature. These often call for specifically

practical clothing that presents a special challenge for fashionable feminine Sapphists, especially those who are fond of skirts, dresses, and heels. On the other hand, the Radclyffe Hall emulators must be strongly cautioned against certain fashion violations that are especially tempting on these "dates."

Rock Climbing

What the Collette styled Sapphist will wear: The average feminine Sapphist, concerned as ze is with showing off hir figure and coordinating hir shoes, earrings and lipstick, may find it quite difficult to dress for rock climbing. Shorts or pants must be worn, and jewelry is proscribed for safety reasons. However, a resourceful Sapphist can accessorize with a fetching kerchief and choose a top that sets off hir décolletage or hir upper arms to great advantage. Remember, many Sapphists find sweat and dirt quite alluring, and a proverbial roll in the hay may very well follow.

What the Radclyffe Hall styled Sapphist will wear: Please note that this is the only social engagement to which it is appropriate to wear athletic sandals with any degree of earnestness.

Under no circumstances should wind pants be worn. Barring these particularly distasteful Sapphic fashion mishaps, any serviceable shorts or pants (cargo pockets may serve to be as much a detriment as a benefit and, thus, the decision is left to each individual) and t-shirt may be worn for such an outing.

Protests and Rallies

Political rallies and protest provide an excellent forum for the urban Sapphist to be both social justice oriented and simply social. Many politically active Sapphists consider a "US out of (blank)" or "Take Back the Night" rally to be an excellent opportunity for a date. We consider such events to be necessary and admirable, but rather unromantic unless they feature a good old fashioned Queer Nation style kiss-in.

If you must protest with your beloved or your crush at your side, we suggest you build an outfit from the feet up, as comfortable shoes are a must. Accessorize with buttons and stickers. As many such events involve long hours in the sun or rain, and much standing, your authors recommend that sensible shoes (again we beseech you, dear readers, no athletic sandals!) and sun block serve as guideposts for dressing. A simple t-shirt showing support for the issue at

hand, or an equally pressing issue, serves not only to highlight the Sapphist's political awareness but also to provide a simple conversation starter in case of unexpected awkwardness. Additionally, sunglasses are a practical way to shield the eyes and highlight the facial features of any rally-goer.

A women's basketball game or other sporting event

What the Collette styled Sapphist will wear: Attire for sporting events is even more casual than for dinner and coffee dates. One may be required to clamber up and down bleachers carrying large cups of beer. One may be forced to consume processed cheese or have beer spilled on one's shoes. To suffer these indignities with one's ladylike reputation intact, we suggest that a flattering pair of jeans be paired with closed toed shoes, such as boots. A young Sapphist we know borrowed a team jersey from a friend to wear on such a date, but was exposed as a fraudulent fan when ze was unable to discuss "hir" team's history or players. Do not let this happen to you - choose team

attire only if you have some knowledge of "your" team.

What the Radclyffe Hall styled Sapphist will wear. Though many enthusiastic sports fans opt to wear themed jerseys as an expression of support, such so-called "team spirit" is rarely appropriate when a Sapphist intends to impress a potential romantic interest. For those Sapphists for whom attending a sporting event sans team regalia seems an unbearable fate, permission to wear a team cap may be granted on an individual basis. Please call on a SPPSSM member to discuss such matters further.

The Ladies (or Lesbian) Golf Association Tour

What the Collette styled Sapphist will wear: The Ladies (or Lesbian) Golf Association Tour is a special breed of sporting event. Heels are proscribed, as they create holes in the turf, and collared shirts are required on most golf courses. We generally frown on the polo shirt, polo shirt dress, and halter polo shirt dress, but they are among your only options here. Or you can affect a retro picnic look with

a white collared shirt tied up around your midriff.

What the Radclyffe Hall styled Sapphist will wear: As many a golf course prohibits entering the grounds unless a collared shirt is worn, the practical Sapphist may consider this staple to be a building block of their tour-viewing attire. A polo shirt, or similarly casual collared shirt, is most appropriately paired with a khaki short or pant (of a cargo or non-cargo variety, depending upon the preference of the wearer) for simple golf-course chic. A sports cap is appropriate in this situation. Although also a practical head wear option in many circles, the visor is generally frowned upon by your authors for any sort of social engagement. As per our earlier item on appropriate costume for a protest or rally, sunglasses and sun block are recommended.

The Womyn's Center Fundraiser

What the Collette styled Sapphist will wear: The womyn's center, that charming bastion of second-wave feminism, is not so commonly patronized by our contemporaries, but we are aware that it is a popular cause among certain

Sapphists. If invited to accompany hir friend to a womyn's center fundraiser or other event, the well-dressed Sapphist should once again sacrifice hir natural inclination towards the fabulous and the feminine and choose simple attire so as not to stand out overmuch among the sandal-wearing denizens of this august institution.

What the Radclyffe Hall styled Sapphist will wear: Although the womyn's center is oft-maligned as being an anachronistic locale with little room for the fashion-forward Sapphist, it remains a staple of many communities and, as such, should be treated with the respect reserved for parents and clergy. Although the contemporary Sapphist may be tempted to "blend in" at such an institution, ze is ill-advised to costume hirself using any of the following, lest ze appear to condescend to the other guests: flannel, pants with a taper in the leg, hemp, sandals paired with socks, hair styled into a mullet.

Sex Parties and Sex Dates

What the Collette styled Sapphist will wear: Is there any conundrum more vexing to the sex-positive Sapphist than

the sex party or casual sex date? Unless one possesses a vast collection of attractive undergarments including panties, bras, slips and stockings, and an equally vast collection of flattering skirts and dresses, we suggest that advance planning is required, to allow time for any necessary shopping trips.

The sex date or sex party requires, after all, several layers of clothing, the outmost of which must be alluring, yet discreet enough to be seen on a public street or in an eating-house or watering hole. Slips, garter belts, and bra straps should not be visible to the public eye, although one may wish to let one's date catch a fleeting glimpse of lace.

A full slip can be obtained second-hand, and allows the sex-party attendee to remove his street clothes without baring all until he feels ready. Half slips and camisoles are also quite proper. The slip is worn over an attractive brassiere and pantaloons, with stocking and a garter belt, or perhaps some knee socks for a charmingly off-key touch. Some prefer to

skip the brassiere altogether in favor of tape or stickers over the nipples, or complete nudity of the upper half.

What the Radclyffe Hall styled Sapphist will wear. Today's polite Sapphist knows that, when choosing an outfit for a romantic dalliance, it is imperative to select clothing pieces that can be discreet in a crowd, as well as serve multiple functions at various points in the evening. The Sapphist who finds himself enamored of the classic suit-and-tie combination is positioned (as it were) to be successfully dressed for multiple stages of the evening. As the suit outfit contains several layers, such a garment can be modified— by adding or removing facets such as a jacket or tie, or unbuttoning shirt buttons— according to the atmosphere or situation in which the Sapphist finds himself. Additionally, multiple layers of clothing provide ample opportunity to conceal or reveal undergarments or anything else the Sapphist in question wishes to limit to his date's eyes only.

